



South Coast Air Quality Management District

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ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ADVISORY GROUP TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2009 MEETING MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Dr. Joseph Lyou, AQMD Governing Board Member, EJAG Chairman
Rhetta Alexander, San Fernando Valley Interfaith Council
Detrich Allen, City of Los Angeles Environmental Affairs
Lawrence Beeson, Loma Linda University, School of Public Health
Suzanne Bilodeau, Knott's Berry Farm
Paul Choe, Korean Drycleaners & Laundry Association
Afif El-Hasan, Kaiser Permanente
Alycia Enciso, Small Business Owner
Mary Figueroa, Riverside Community College
Evelyn Knight, Long Beach Economic Development Commission
Brenda LaMothe, S. Los Angeles Service Representative for L.A. Mayor
Angelo Logan, East Yard Communities for E.J.
Margaret Mapes, St. Joseph Center
Jacqueline Martinez, PUMA
Daniel Morales, National Alliance for Human Rights
William Nelson, OC Signature Properties
Paul Ong, UCLA School of Public Affairs
Fred Rodriguez, Veterans in Community Services, Inc.
Woodie Rucker-Hughes, NAACP – Riverside Branch

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mimi Holt, SEIU Local 121 Registered Nurses
Maria Elena Kennedy, California Latino Water Coalition
Rabbi Jonathan Klein, CLUE Los Angeles
Nury Martinez, Pacoima Beautiful
Salvador Ramirez, National Hispanic Environmental Council

OTHERS PRESENT:

Nicole Nishimura, Board Member Assistant (*Lyou*)

AQMD STAFF:

Anupom Ganguli, Ph.D., Assistant Deputy Executive Officer/Public Advisor
John Olvera, Principal Deputy District Counsel
Kirk Dublin, District Prosecutor
Susan Nakamura, Planning & Rules Manager
Alan Caldwell, Community Relations Manager
Dr. Jean Ospital, Health Effects Officer
Deanna Doerre, Office Assistant

Nicole Mendoza, Secretary
Rocio Santacruz, Sr. Public Information Specialist
Jeanette Short, Sr. Administrative Secretary
Danielle Soto, Temporary Staff Assistant

Agenda Item #1 - Call to Order/Opening Remarks

Chair Dr. Joseph Lyou called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

Agenda Item #2 – EJAG Member Introductions

Chair Lyou introduced himself and provided a brief overview of the AQMD and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

***Action Item:** Place on the Agenda an Air Quality and AQMD Overview.*

Agenda Item #3 – Mission, Goals, Role and Responsibilities of EJAG

Mr. John Olvera gave an overview of the Mission, Goals, Role and Responsibilities of the Environmental Justice Advisory Group (EJAG). He further explained agenda posting in relation to the Brown Act notice and the Ethics Training requirement for all committee members, which is required once every two years.

Mr. Fred Rodriguez asked if the Ethics Training was the same as the one on the internet. Mr. Olvera affirmed and indicated there usually is a grace period and there are one or two trainings scheduled for the remainder of the year, for which members should receive a reminder following the meeting.

Ms. Detrich Allen asked if this training was recently completed, can a copy of the certificate be submitted. Mr. Olvera affirmed this and requested members to submit a copy to his office.

Mr. Angelo Logan referred to the goals of EJAG and asked if it included policy recommendations. Chair Lyou and Dr. Anupom Ganguli both responded that it did and is forwarded to the Administrative Committee. Mr. Logan further asked if a policy recommendation was made, will the Administrative Committee forward it to the Board for consideration. Chair Lyou reviewed the process, saying it would typically go into Administrative Committee minutes and be included in the Board package. Chair Lyou said if it was something they felt important, he could bring it up to the other Board Members in his comments or agendize it on the Governing Board Agenda. Chair Lyou also added that anyone can attend Governing Board meetings and bring it up during the Public Comment period. Mr. Logan responded that the process needs to be focused on what types of systematic approaches can be recommended to remedy some of the issues related to Environmental Justice (EJ) in their communities, and how to strategically change policy. Chair Lyou noted Dr. Ganguli would discuss it in his work plan presentation.

Ms. Alycia Enciso asked if meeting four times a year was enough time to do what they needed to do. Chair Lyou explained the meetings would be longer and more extensive to cover the issues.

***Action Item:** Organize and distribute a contact list with member's and staff's contact information.*

Agenda Item #4 – AQMD Environmental Justice Overview

Dr. Ganguli provided an EJ Program Overview with examples of past AQMD EJ initiatives. He informed the members they would have a better understanding of how EJ considerations are incorporated through the agency's activities once the AQMD overview is presented at the next meeting.

Ms. Woodie Rucker-Hughes asked if there was a companion to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Chair Lyou replied at the federal level, there is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which is required for federal agency decisions. Dr. Ganguli noted CEQA was more restrictive and more protective than NEPA. Chair Lyou added that the restrictions are in regards to the mitigation requirements.

Mr. Logan asked how AQMD has measured EJ success since the initiation of EJ. Dr. Ganguli said actual involvement of communities, progress made in improving air quality and protecting public health are the general criteria. He further added that there is no single measure or combination of measures. Chair Lyou added that one of the aspects of EJAG charter is to assist with ways to measure the success of EJ.

Action Item: *Members to review work plans and submit three to five highest priorities to staff.*

Ms. Evelyn Knight asked if there was a preventative process or strategy of environmental systems that deals with pollution before it gets into communities. Chair Lyou responded it is a general question that would be best answered during the Air Quality overview which includes technology development and requirements under the Clean Air Act. He also noted there are incentive programs where AQMD receives and provides funds to reduce pollution.

Ms. Enciso asked how AQMD deals with trains. Chair Lyou responded it is a complicated issue. He said District Counsel can talk about the legal challenges surrounding it and recommended that she should talk to Mr. Logan about his involvement and efforts. Chair Lyou also pointed out that one of the items on the EJAG Goals & Objectives is Goods Movement which could be a high priority item. He asked Mr. Logan to talk with Ms. Enciso about the issues going on with the Air Resources Board.

Mr. Rodriguez asked if a list of the worst polluters can be provided to the members as well as a list of organizations that have already demonstrated some of the techniques to clean up the air.

Action Item: *Staff to provide an overview of the major sources of air pollution and technological solutions.*

Agenda Item #5 – Proposed 2009 Goals & Objectives

In response to a request from Dr. Lyou, Ms. Susan Nakamura provided background information on the Clean Communities Plan and their approach for addressing air toxics.

Chair Lyou asked Ms. Nakamura when she expects the Clean Communities Plan to be discussed at the Governing Board level. Ms. Nakamura responded sometime in the Fall.

Action Item: *Agendize a discussion on the Clean Communities Plan.*

Mr. Paul Ong asked if any thought was given on how to handle the mobility of people throughout the day or throughout the week. Ms. Nakamura said it is not something they included in the Clean Communities Plan. She said it is assumed that people work and live in an area for 70 years. However, she said she would take the suggestion back to the Office of Environmental Hazard Assessment (OEHA).

Action Item: *Staff to provide a list of acronyms for members.*

Ms. Allen asked if the Clean Communities Plan is different from Local Government Plans and in the drafting of the Clean Communities Plan if there has been discussion with local governments so the plans complement each other. Ms. Nakamura said it's different from a general plan or local government plan and is similar to AQMD's previous Air Toxics Control Plan, but more simplified.

Action Item: *Provide members a draft of Clean Communities Plan and give members notice of meetings.*

Mr. Logan asked if members could get a copy of the Cumulative Impacts White Paper. Chair Lyou clarified it as the Cumulative Impacts Reduction Strategy White Paper. Ms. Nakamura added that it is outdated but was the foundation for the Clean Communities Plan.

Action Item: *Provide members a copy of the Cumulative Impacts Reduction Strategy White Paper.*

Mr. Logan said the Clean Communities Plan sounds good if it addresses the cumulative impacts and permitting issues. Chair Lyou asked Ms. Nakamura for clarification who stated that is the goal. Chair Lyou responded to Mr. Logan that he would assume that it is being included in the Clean Communities Plan, and offered to provide some additional material on this topic.

Action Item: *Chair Lyou to provide a list of cumulative impact gaps.*

Dr. Lawrence Beeson asked if the Clean Communities Plan includes the emission offset policy. Dr. Ganguli replied that it is an important but different issue.

Ms. Margaret Mapes asked if the permitting process included residential developers. Chair Lyou responded it did and AQMD is trying to come up with ways for local governments to make better land use decisions and land development decisions.

Mr. Rodriguez asked if there is rationale behind the order of the Goals & Objectives. Dr. Ganguli responded there is and explained why staff recommended them. A request was made for a presentation on health studies.

Action Item: *Request Dr. Jean Ospital to provide an update on health studies related to air pollutants.*

Ms. Knight asked if there are mitigation strategies to address the expansion of the ports. Chair Lyou asked if her question referred to any particular project. He said CEQA requires other agencies to consult with AQMD. He furthered added that projects are required to go through the permitting process and follow all applicable regulations.

Mr. Ong suggested programs to (1) assess and enhance the AQMD's ability to conduct socioeconomic analysis to identify which community is affected; and (2) create a system that better communicates with communities about issues facing them. Dr. Ganguli informed the members that the Governing Board recently approved a contractor who is looking at AQMD's communication system and web based tools.

Action Item: *Provide a report on socioeconomic analysis and tools AQMD uses.*

Mr. Logan added that more information is needed to identify what geographic areas are overly burdened with pollution and the impact on those communities.

Ms. Enciso asked how AQMD informs local communities when air quality is not good. Chair Lyou responded that part of the Board Chairman's effort is to increase the technological capability for the agency to better inform the public. Dr. Ganguli said that a system is available on the website in real time, but has limitations. Dr. Ganguli explained it doesn't have the communication capabilities of sending out emails. Ms. Enciso asked if AQMD tells people to stay home or wear masks when air quality is bad. Dr. Ganguli explained they do not recommend particular health actions because that is the responsibility of the health agencies. Ms. Enciso asked what health agencies the AQMD is partnering with to inform the public. Dr. Ospital responded they work with the Los Angeles County Health Department and others to provide alerts to the community members.

Ms. Knight asked if news media were used to inform the community. Dr. Ospital responded they do work with the news media.

Ms. Enciso asked what health agencies are used in the Inland Empire. Dr. Ospital replied they are in touch with all the county health departments. Chair Lyou said that Item #5 on the Goals & Objectives needs to be broader to include health studies and education.

Mr. Daniel Morales asked Chair Lyou if there were any plans to have community events that members can attend, such as Asthma Conferences or community meetings. Dr. Ganguli announced the upcoming Community Health Conference in July and plans for future Town Hall Meetings.

Mr. Paul Choe asked if there would be a presentation or analysis for Item #9 on the Goals & Objectives, and if such technology development applied to EJ issues. Dr. Ganguli said programs like the lawnmower exchange promote new technology. Chair Lyou responded new technology is an important aspect and technology presentations will be part of the meetings. Ms. Rucker-Hughes mentioned the importance of thoroughly educating the public about new technology. She referred to the new "fluorescent" light bulbs as an example of the public not being completely educated. They understood the environmental benefits but were not informed about the risk of Mercury exposure if light bulbs are broken.

Ms. Enciso asked if there were minutes for the meeting or if it were a general meeting. Chair Lyou responded there would be minutes, but they would be abbreviated.

Mr. Morales asked if AQMD had anything to do with proposing Legislation for Hybrid cars and HOV lane stickers. Chair Lyou answered there was a limitation on how many cars would receive HOV tags but that is not under AQMD's jurisdiction.

Mr. Logan referred to an earlier suggestion that information be legible for community members and recommended they articulate it in the goals. Chair Lyou and Dr. Ganguli agreed and stated they would ensure communications are understandable.

Agenda Item #6 – Calendar & Other Recommendations

Chair Lyou began discussion of future meetings and tentatively said the next one would be scheduled towards the end of July.

Ms. Allen suggested meetings be held at AQMD to reduce impact on staff resources.

Ms. Enciso asked if Ms. Nakamura was providing a list of workshops for the Clean Communities Plan. Ms. Nakamura responded they are not yet scheduled, but once scheduled she would provide this to the members.

Agenda Item #7 – Public Comment

No comments.

Agenda Item #8 - Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:41 p.m.